



**CHEVY CHASE
VILLAGE
POLICE
DEPARTMENT**

Police Chief: John Fitzgerald

**GENERAL ORDER: 5-12.1 COMMUNITY RELATIONS/
COMMUNITY POLICING PROGRAM**

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DISTRIBUTION: **All Employees**

I. POLICY

The Chevy Chase Village Police Department is committed to the principle that cooperation and positive interaction between the community and every member of the Department is a critical element in achieving the Department's goal of establishing close ties with and responding to the needs of the community. Positive community relations represent a unity of purpose between the members of the Department and the community towards the common goal of preserving the peace through equitable law enforcement. The goal of our community relations effort is to establish a strong, lasting trust and mutual respect between the community and the members of the Department based upon the fair, unbiased, honest, professional and sensitive conduct of each member of the Department. Achieving this goal will create an environment in which every member of the Department is able to perform his/her duties with the support and understanding of the community.

II. PURPOSE

This General Order defines the philosophy and programs of the Department regarding community relations.

III. GENERAL PROCEDURES

- A. Community relations efforts must focus on increasing the community's understanding and trust in the Department, its programs and activities, and its employees.
- B. Every member of the Department is considered an integral part of the Department's mission to achieve its community involvement objectives. As such, every employee of the Department is responsible for promoting and assisting in the attainment of those objectives through fair and impartial conduct and through effective communication with members of the community and with Village and Department employees at all levels.

- C. In each and every contact between a member of the Department and a member of the community, the guiding principle shall be to treat the individual contacted with respect for his/her dignity.
- D. Unless safety or operational concerns dictate otherwise, officers shall introduce themselves by name and shall provide their business card during the course of their duties whenever they make contact with an individual.
- E. The Chief of Police will retain overall responsibility for the Department's community involvement programs.

**IV. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS/
ACTIVITIES**

All contacts, both official and unofficial, between a member of the Department and an individual or group in the community are within the scope of the Department's community policing program. The following are examples of means by which the Department establishes and maintains a relationship of trust with our community; the components of our community policing program are divided into four dimensions: philosophical, strategic, tactical and organizational.

PHILOSOPHICAL DIMENSION:

- A. **Officer Courtesy and Accountability:** We emphasize and require all members of the Department to treat all persons pleasantly, respectfully and with a helpful demeanor. Additionally, sworn officers are required to provide their business cards to every person they make contact with; the officer must offer his/her card automatically (without being asked by the citizen).
- B. **Re-Contacting Complainants:** Often, citizens call the police, the police respond and handle the problem, but the citizen/caller is not made aware what the officer did or what the outcome was. In our agency, after our officers respond to and deal with each call for service, officers will return to the complainant and

inform him/her of the outcome of the call, or the dispatcher will make telephone contact with the complainant and explain what the officer did. This customer-centered service is appreciated by our constituents.

- C. **Transparency:** To the extent practical and permitted by law, the Department responds promptly to requests for statistics, records, data and any other information in its possession, and is courteous and responsive to news media organizations.
- D. **Overall Agency Culture and Philosophy:** The Department tracks compliments and complaints and reinforces positive behaviors and performances so that employees are encouraged to continue to serve in a way that fortifies the community's trust in the Department.

STRATEGIC DIMENSION:

- E. **Public Safety Committee:** The Chief meets periodically with the Public Safety Committee (PSC) which is comprised of residents of the Village. The PSC helps the Chief understand the concerns and interests of our citizens, and the committee advises the Chief on programs, budget items, and initiatives that may be helpful in preventing crime or enhancing public safety.
- F. **Monthly Board Meetings:** The Chief (or designee) attends each monthly public meeting of the Village Board of Managers, listens to residents as they address the elected officials, presents the Department's monthly report, and answers questions from the Board or other attendees.
- G. **House Check Program:** Whenever a resident plans to be away from their home for more than 24 hours, they may request a house check. Once a resident requests it, our officers check the home twice a day. Officers walk the entire perimeter of the home to make sure it is secure, they remove any delivered newspapers, mail and packages, and they bring them to the police station to be stored securely until the resident returns to retrieve their mail/packages. Our residents value this service very highly.
- H. **Key Program:** We securely store spare house keys for the majority of homes in our community. We use the key in emergencies when the resident is away, as well as to assist the homeowner when they've misplaced their key.
- I. **Home Security Surveys:** We offer personalized home security surveys by appointment. An

officer will check the entire house and surrounding property and make written recommendations to the homeowner to enhance the safety and security of their residence.

- J. **Every Sworn Officer Trained in CIT:** Every sworn member—including the Chief of Police—has been through Crisis Intervention Team training. The soft skills learned there (de-escalation, redirection, dealing with persons with special needs and/or in crisis) are very important and can be used in a variety of situations in policing.
- K. **MOU with MCPD:** We enjoy a close working relationship with the County Police, and we have a written agreement that describes our mutual interests, responsibilities, and commitment to working jointly to provide public safety services within Chevy Chase Village.

TACTICAL DIMENSION:

- L. **Monthly geo-based crime maps to field units:** At the end of each month, the Public Safety Coordinator publishes geographic maps of the Village depicting crimes for the month and year-to-date. The lieutenant distributes the maps to each officer to provide them with timely information so that they can be effective in the field.
- M. **Rapid Targeted Response to Traffic Concerns:** Our officers are promptly (sometimes on the same day that the complaint is received) assigned to locations where traffic violations are reported by residents. This level of responsiveness demonstrates respect for our citizens, and our commitment to community service.
- N. **Directed Patrol Assignments:** Each week, officers are provided with specific traffic enforcement and crime prevention/detection assignments in writing. The assignments include the hours, locations and other specifics to focus officers on the problems that have been identified through community complaints and requests, calls for service, crime analysis, and field experiences.
- O. **Foot Patrols of Western Grove Park and Buffer Zone Path:** These public spaces are popular with our residents and citizens have expressed their desire for extra patrol to deter crime (drug use, graffiti, littering, theft) and other unwanted behaviors (overnight sleeping, noise, skateboarding). Our foot patrols allow our officers to carefully inspect the area, are an effective deterrent to misbehavior, and encourage face-to-face interaction with the public.

P. **Prompt, Clear, Community-Wide Communication:** The Department publicizes important or noteworthy happenings through urgent or weekly email blasts, press releases, and/or the Crier newsletter as appropriate.

Q. **Prescription Drug Drop Box:** We offer a secure steel container in which anyone may drop their unused/unwanted medications to prevent others from stealing and/or abusing them, and to provide an environmentally sound way to discard them.

ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSION:

R. **Universal Acceptance of Complaints:** Allegations of misconduct are received from anyone in any manner, and employees are required to forward all such allegations to the Chief of Police. Following a thorough investigation, the nature and results of each allegation is posted on the Department's website.

S. **12-Hour, Non-rotating Patrol Schedule:** This schedule provides the structural framework which enables our officers to implement our community policing philosophy, strategy and tactics. Officers work either permanent days or permanent nights with the same teammates. This consistency enables officers to know the people, patterns and routines that recur during their duty hours. Importantly, the officers work safely and efficiently as they get to know their teammates well.

T. **Self-Reporting Requirement:** In order to insure our integrity and our employees' continuing adherence to law and policy, our agency requires all employees to promptly report to their supervisor whenever they:

- Are arrested or charged with any type of criminal offense in any jurisdiction; or
- Are arrested or charged with any type of incarcerable traffic offense in any jurisdiction; or
- Are served with or become the subject of a protective order (or equivalent) or peace order (or equivalent) issued by any court; or
- Become aware that they are the target of any criminal investigation being conducted by any governmental agency; or
- Become aware that their driver's license is suspended.

U. **Semi-Annual Background Check Refresher:** In furtherance of our efforts to ensure that employees continue to adhere to law and policy, to maintain public trust and as a part of our risk

management program, a police executive performs a computer background check (NCIC, MVA, METERS, CaseSearch, NCR Linx) on every employee, including the Chief of Police, and the results are reviewed by the Chief, and a summary memo is prepared and sent to the Village Manager.

This directive voids the previous version dated 10/30/2017.